

**METROPOLITAN ACTION COMMISSION
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MEETING MINUTES
Board Room
January 24, 2008**

The Promise: Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community and are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.

Present: Calvin Atchison, Awadh Binhazim, Barbara Clinton, Jennifer Cole, Karen Doty, Keith Durbin, Florence Kidd, Robert McNeilly, Sandra Moore, Adinah Robertson, Gerri Robinson, Phil Ryan, LaVoneia Steele, Hobert Suggs, and Maria Valentin-Pridgen

Absent: Brady Banks, Dale Farran, and Candace Reynolds

Staff/Guests: Tyronda Burgess, Marvin Cox, Karen Crook, Cynthia Croom, Pamela Matthews, and Danielle Mezera

Mr. McNeilly called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

Motion: *Approve November 29, 2007, meeting minutes.*

Made by: *Jen Cole*

Seconded: *Karen Doty*

Passed unanimously.

SUCCESS STORY

Mr. Preston Newbell was introduced as a 2004 GED graduate, who joined the U.S. Army shortly after graduation. After boot camp, Mr. Newbell was deployed to Iraq. He stated that the most difficult part of joining the Army has been learning how to work with "older" adults. He is currently home on leave and will soon return to Iraq. Mr. Newbell stated that the GED program prepared him "for what is out there." He sees other students who aren't motivated to continue their education. Mr. Newbell thanks Dr. Collins and Ms. Sherrill for providing him with the support and motivation he needed to complete his GED. Mr. Newbell stated that after his Army tour, he would like to attend school to become a registered nurse.

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR as reported by Robert McNeilly, Chair

In his role as Board Chair, Mr. McNeilly receives from the Tennessee Department of Human Services a copy of both the STAR program licensing letter and Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS) letter for each Head Start center. These letters are part of licensing regulation and are used to determine quality in a child care site. For the licensing STAR program, a center can score between zero and three stars. For the ECERS scoring, 1-3 is determined below average, 4 is average, and 5-7 is considered above average. Tom Joy and Ross have already received their licenses. Susan Gray, North, and Dudley licenses renew December 1. Richland received a 3.79 ECERS rating. Head Start has begun the appeal process for the rating.

There is a joint plan between the Agency and Chamber of Commerce to hold a summit on poverty in Nashville.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT as reported by Cynthia Croom

Head Start Reauthorization

President Bush signed the Head Start Reauthorization legislation, but vetoed the appropriations. The attached Head Start Reauthorization document highlights the major changes to the Head Start program, which includes:

1. Grantee designation – evaluation to be completed at the end of five years of funding to determine if the agency should remain the grantee. Current funding formula will not be effective July 1, yet, there will also be a reduction to the appropriation dollars.
2. Target population – homeless children will receive priority status. HHS to write specific language change. Previous eligibility was for children whose families were at or below 100% of the poverty index. The new legislation allows 35% of enrollment to be children whose families are at or below 135% of the poverty index.
3. Governance/Management – an attorney, a person with accounting experience, and a person with early childhood education experience must serve on the governing body. An account of administrative changes shall be submitted annually. An annual report is to be provided to the community. As the governing body (Board of Commissioners) has legal and fiduciary responsibilities, the distinctive roles of the policy council and the governing board were further defined. Board members will receive training on their roles and responsibilities.
4. Staff Education – 50% of teachers must have a bachelor or advanced degree. (Metro Action Head Start met that goal quite a few years ago.)

LIHEAP

Funds are expended. However, a \$426,000 State-appropriation will go before Council that will enable the Agency to serve the 1,257 families who are currently on the waiting list.

Security Audit

As required by all Metro departments, a report that outlines how the Agency secures both written and electronic data was submitted to the Mayor.

Meetings with Council Members

Mrs. Croom, Mrs. Gallon, and Mr. Cox are meeting with Council members whose districts are in the top ten poverty areas of Davidson County. These meetings are helpful as Council members are sharing their concerns and thoughts about poverty issues in their districts.

FINANCE REPORT as reported by Tyronda Burgess, Chief Financial Officer

The financial performance report reflects July 1 – December 31. Admin has a <\$1,120.00> fund balance due to the Summer Food Program charging \$50,000 to Admin in order to stop accruing interest charges. The negative fund balance resulted from the cost of preparing the meals. This year was the first the Agency prepared the meals and staff believes that future years will not have a negative balance for food preparation. The Agency will look at securing quality, donated foods to offset future costs. The remaining <\$834> in Summer Lunch fund is accrued interest charges. LIHEAP is pending the transfer of local match dollars received quarterly. The CACFP balance is pending state reimbursement. The Before/After Care funds are pending reimbursement. Currently, each center inputs its data into the system and the state reimburses based upon data submitted. The Accounting Department will become more involved to strengthen this process so as to know the expected amount of reimbursement. In-kind will be met as the depreciation cost of Dudley and Susan Gray are not reflected. Interest is earning on all positive fund balances.

ITEMS REQUIRING BOARD ACTION

CSBG Admissions Policy

The majority of the policy is driven by state requirements set out in the CSBG state plan. Board members questioned which items in the policy were discretionary. By verbal consensus, this Board action was deferred to the March meeting so Board members can be provided with a document highlighting items that are discretionary.

Community Action Plan

Deferred to March meeting by verbal consensus.

PROGRAM REPORTS

Public Information

Boston College sponsored 17 school administrators from Ireland and Northern Ireland who are researching how educational systems in the America integrate different cultures in a learning environment. Dr. Farran was instrumental in having this prestigious group visit the very multi-cultural Susan Gray Head Start Center. Report attached.

Community Programs

Report attached.

Head Start

A new process for the three-year funding cycle is for a conference call with the regional office to occur 60 days before the grant is due (March 31). The Agency's conference call is scheduled for January 30, 2008. Report attached.

Administrative Services and Operations

Renovations to Lindsley Hall are scheduled to be completed for an August 2008 move-in date. The children zoned for the Ross Head Start Center will transfer to the newly-built, LEED-certified Douglas Head Start Center scheduled to open August 2008. The children zoned for the North Center will temporarily transfer to the Ross Center to allow a new North Center to be built. After the North Center is complete, the Ross Center will be returned to the community/city.

Human Resources

All supervisors are completing staff mid-year performance evaluations.

Meeting adjourned. Next meeting March 27, 2008

Minutes submitted by:

Barbara Clinton, Secretary
Board of Commissioners